

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.(currently amended): A method of making a carbon fiber-carbon matrix reinforced ceramic composite, said method comprising:

selecting a plurality of carbon fiber bundles, each of said carbon fiber bundles including a plurality of individual carbon fibers;

forming a preform from said plurality of carbon fiber bundles;

forming a deposit of carbon within said carbon fiber bundles and between said plurality of carbon fiber bundles, said deposits of carbon being formed by chemical vapor deposition ~~using methane precursor~~;

recovering a resultant open porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform from said forming wherein said carbon fiber bundles comprise carbon fiber-carbon matrix ~~composites~~ composite reinforcements, and said open porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform comprises a plurality of said carbon fiber-carbon matrix ~~composites~~ composite reinforcements embedded within a matrix of sacrificial carbon, said matrix of sacrificial carbon generally forming a dense coating around said carbon fiber-carbon matrix composite reinforcements and having voids therein between said carbon fiber-carbon matrix composite reinforcements and said porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform having a preform void volume;

placing said open porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform in contact with a molten infiltrant, said molten infiltrant having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade and being capable of reacting with carbon to form a carbide;

letting said molten ~~infiltrant~~ infiltrant infiltrate said porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform without the application of pressure; ~~and~~

allowing said matrix of sacrificial carbon to react with said molten infiltrant to form a metal carbide matrix, said allowing including providing an amount of said molten infiltrant that is sufficient to permit ~~permitting~~ said molten infiltrant to react preferentially with said matrix of sacrificial carbon and substantially not with said carbon fiber-carbon matrix ~~composites~~ composite reinforcements; and recovering said carbon fiber-carbon matrix reinforced ceramic composite from said allowing.

2.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 wherein said selecting includes selecting carbon fiber bundles wherein substantially each of said individual carbon fibers has a substantially continuous coating of a metallic oxide or carbide thereon.

3.(currently amended): A method of ~~claim 1~~ claim 2 wherein said selecting includes selecting carbon fiber bundles wherein substantially each of said individual carbon fibers has a substantially continuous coating of a metallic carbide thereon.

4.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 wherein said selecting includes applying a substantially continuous coating of pyrolitic carbon on each of said individual carbon fibers and exposing the resulting pyrolitic carbon coated fibers to air before said forming.

5.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 including contacting said metal carbide matrix with molten silicon, and permitting said molten silicon to diffuse into said metal carbide matrix and substantially not into said carbon fiber-carbon matrix composite reinforcements.

6.(original): A method of claim 1 wherein said carbon fiber bundles are in the form of tows.

7.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 including contacting said metal carbide matrix with approximately an amount of molten silicon that will diffuse into said metal carbide matrix, and allowing approximately all of said silicon to diffuse into said metal carbide matrix without ~~reacting~~ diffusing substantially ~~with~~ into said carbon fiber-carbon matrix ~~composites~~ composite reinforcements.

8.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 wherein said letting includes providing no more than approximately 25 volume percent more of said molten infiltrant than the volume of said voids ~~preform void volume~~.

9.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 wherein said placing includes placing said open porous carbon fiber-carbon matrix preform in contact with molten zirconium, hafnium, or hafnium, tantalum, mixtures, or alloys thereof.

10.(original): A method of claim 1 including selecting said infiltrant from alloys of said molten infiltrants.

11.(original): A method of claim 1 wherein said placing includes placing approximately an amount of metal that will react with said sacrificial carbon in said open porous carbon-fiber-carbon matrix preform, and said letting includes allowing said sacrificial carbon to react with approximately all of said metal, and contacting said metal carbide matrix with approximately an amount of molten silicon that will diffuse into said metal carbide matrix, and allowing approximately all of said silicon to diffuse into said metal carbide matrix.

12.(original): A method of claim 11 wherein said contacting includes contacting said metal carbide matrix with an amount of molten silicon that is more than an amount of silicon that will diffuse into said metal carbide matrix.

13.(currently amended): A method of claim 1 wherein said placing includes placing a stoichiometric excess of metal in contact with said open porous carbon-fiber-carbon matrix preform, and said letting includes allowing said sacrificial carbon to react with said metal, and contacting said metal carbide matrix with approximately an amount of molten silicon that will diffuse completely into said metal carbide matrix.

14.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising: a carbon-carbon composite comprising a plurality of carbon fibers in a carbon matrix, said carbon-carbon composite being embedded within a carbide matrix comprised of a solid carbide of at least one carbide forming metal having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade.

15.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite of claim 14 wherein said carbide matrix includes a reaction product of molten silicon diffused into said solid carbide.

16.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite of claim 14 wherein said carbon matrix is pyrolytic carbon.

17.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising: a carbon-carbon composite comprising a plurality of carbon fibers in a carbon matrix, said carbon-carbon composite being embedded within a carbide matrix comprised of a solid carbide of at least one metal having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade, said carbide matrix includes a reaction product of molten silicon diffused into said solid carbide, and the ratio of said silicon to said metal in said solid carbide is greater than about 1 to 1.

18.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising: a carbon-carbon composite comprising a plurality of carbon fibers in a carbon matrix, said carbon-carbon composite being embedded within a carbide matrix comprised of a solid carbide of at least one metal having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade, said carbide matrix includes a reaction product of molten silicon diffused into said solid carbide, and the ratio of said silicon to said metal in said solid carbide is less than about 1 to 1.

19.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising: a carbon-carbon composite comprising a plurality of carbon fiber bundles in a carbon matrix, said carbon-carbon composite being embedded within a carbide matrix

comprised of a solid carbide of at least one Group IV element having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade, and said carbide matrix includes a reaction product of molten silicon diffused into said solid carbide.

20.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising:
a plurality of carbon fibers in a bundle, and a plurality of said bundles in said carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite;
a coating comprised of metal oxide substantially encapsulating each of said carbon fibers;
a formed in situ carbon matrix between said carbon fibers in said bundles; and
a formed in situ carbide matrix between said plurality of bundles comprised of a solid metal carbide of at least one Group IV element having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade, and said carbide matrix includes a reaction product of molten silicon diffused into said solid carbide.

21.(withdrawn): A carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite comprising:
a carbon-carbon composite comprised of a plurality of carbon fibers in a carbon matrix, and a plurality of said carbon-carbon composites in said carbon-carbon reinforced ceramic composite;
a coating comprised of carbon substantially encapsulating each of said carbon fibers; and
a formed in situ carbide matrix between said plurality of carbon-carbon composites comprised of reaction products of molten silicon diffused into a solid metal carbide of at least one Group IV element having a melting point above about 1850 degrees centigrade.